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ABSTRACT

This report summarizes the papers and discussions of a conference on education of older people. The conference had the following objectives: (1) to highlight examples of good practice in education and training for older people; (2) to encourage interprofessional contact and cooperation; and (3) to strengthen international networks in order to promote the development of education and training for older people. The sessions described in the report are the following: "Conference Welcome and Opening Presentation: Work, the Second 50 Years"; "Pre-Retirement Education in the European Community in Hard Times--A Need for Policy"; "Older Women: What Do They Want? What Do They Know?--Education and Training Experiences within European Community Countries"; "Working and Learning Together: A European Overview"; "Learning and Older Learners: A Role for the Media?"; "International Developments in the Self-Help Education Movement: The University of the Third Age"; "Educational Initiatives for Older People beyond the European Community"; and "Summing Up and Conclusion." The report also summarizes the discussions conducted during the following workshops: intergenerational solidarity, employment and training, self-help, and rural issues. Also included are the conference program, a list of participants, and a list of six references. (KC)

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ED 368 966

WORKING AND LEARNING TOGETHER

European Initiatives with Older People

CONFERENCE REPORT

1st - 4th July 1993
University of Strathclyde

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AEG
Association for Educational Gerontology

EUROPEAN YEAR
OF OLDER PEOPLE AND
SOLIDARITY BETWEEN GENERATIONS
1993

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WORKING AND LEARNING TOGETHER

European Initiatives with Older People

A report of the annual conference of the Association for Educational Gerontology held in 1993, the European Year of Older People and Solidarity between Generations

July 1 - 4 1993
at University of Strathclyde

Working and Learning Together
University of Strathclyde July 1 - 4 1993
Members of Conference Planning Group

Bruce Clarke
Frank Glendenning
Lesley Hart
Dianne Norton
Jenny Theairs
William Tyler
Joanna Walker
Robin Webster
Cynthia Wyld

First published in 1993 by the Association for Educational Gerontology, c/o Department of Educational Studies, University of Surrey, Guildford, Surrey, GU2 5RX.
Edited by Keith Percy, Department of Continuing Education, Lancaster University

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CONTENTS

Editorial Introduction
1

Conference Programme
3

Conference Report
5

Conference Evaluation
35

List of those attending Conference
37

References
43

EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

The Association for Educational Gerontology has been organising annual conferences since the mid 1980s, mostly at Keele University, but the 1993 Conference, *Working and Learning Together*, was the biggest and the most ambitious yet. Since it was to be held in the European Year of Older People and Solidarity between the Generations, a planning committee was established eighteen months in advance to secure a programme and an attendance which was truly European. The Committee was also charged to request the financial support from the European Community and other sponsors which would make the ambitious plans possible. The success of the planning committee (listed on the inside front cover) can be judged from the pages of this Report.

It was an excellent proposal from the planning committee that the 1993 Conference be held in Glasgow on the campus of the University of Strathclyde. There the hosts of the Conference could be that University's Senior Studies Institute, a remarkable success story of the late 1980s which had grown out of a Learning in Later Life provision. The Executive Committee of AEG acknowledge gratefully the work of Lesley Hart and her colleagues at the Senior Studies Institute in enabling the Conference to proceed so successfully.

The objectives of the Conference were declared in its prospectus to be:

- to highlight examples of good practice in education and training for older people
- to encourage inter-professional contact and cooperation
- to strengthen international networks in order to promote the development of education and training for older people.

Some 75 delegates, from 13 countries, attended the Conference which lasted from Thursday 1st July to Sunday 4th July.

The programme of the Conference is printed at pages 3-4 and is followed by a substantial conference report written by Ronald Wilson, a former Principal of the Manchester College of Adult Education. Tribute must be given to Ronald for a fluent, coherent, accurate and immensely readable report that does justice to the wide range of contributions and discussions in the programme. A brief summary of some general points arising from Conference evaluation forms completed by participants appears at page 35 and is followed by the full list of Conference participants.

The Executive Committee and members of the Association for Educational Gerontology acknowledge with gratitude the financial and other contributions to its 1993 Annual Conference made by the

- Commission of European Union
- Glasgow Development Agency
- ReAction Trust
- University of Strathclyde.

Keith Percy
Lancaster University

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

THURSDAY 1 JULY

from 2.00 p.m.	ARRIVAL AND REGISTRATION	
3.00 p.m.	TEA	
3.00 - 4.30 p.m.	Annual General Meeting AEG	
4.30 - 5.30 p.m.	SESSION 1:	Welcome from Professor Peter Reed, Vice Principal, Strathclyde University
	Chair: Professor David James	Presentation Professor Robert Kenedi, Strathclyde University, *Work, the second 50 years*
5.30 p.m.	Sherry reception	Informal meeting and information exchange
6.30 p.m.	DINNER	
8.00 - 9.15 p.m.	SESSION 2: Chair: Dr Charles Freer	Plenary presentation Professor Ricardo Moragas Moragas University of Barcelona - *PRE in the EC in hard times - a need for policy*

FRIDAY 2 JULY

8.00 a.m.	BREAKFAST	
9.00 - 10.15 a.m.	SESSION 3: Chair: Lesley Hart	Plenary presentation Dr Sheila Peace, Open University *Older Women: What do they want? What do we know? - Education and Training Experiences within EC Countries*
10.15 a.m.	COFFEE	
10.45 a.m. - 12 noon	SESSION 4:	Workshops (a) Intergenerational solidarity or (d) Rural issues
12.30 p.m.	LUNCH	
1.30 - 2.45 p.m.	SESSION 5:	Workshops (b) Employment and Training or (c) Self-help
2.45 p.m.	TEA	
3.15 - 4.30 p.m.	SESSION 6: Chair: Robin Webster	Plenary presentation *Working and learning together, a European overview* 1. Hugh McMahon, MEP 2. Eamon McInerney, EC DG5 "Older People" 3. Gerald Bogard, Council of Europe
5.00 - 6.00 p.m.	CIVIC RECEPTION at the new St. Mungo's Museum	Hosted by the Glasgow City Council and Strathclyde Regional Council

6.30 p.m.	DINNER	
8.00 - 9.00 p.m.	SESSION 7: Chair: William Tyler	Plenary presentation Professor Brian Groombridge, University of London - *Learning and older learners, a role for the media?*
9.00 p.m.	Scottish Dancing	

SATURDAY 3 JULY

8.00 a.m.	BREAKFAST	
9.00 - 10.15 a.m.	SESSION 8:	Workshops (d) Rural issues or (a) Intergenerational solidarity
10.15 a.m.	COFFEE	
10.45 - 12 noon	SESSION 9:	Workshops (c) Self-help or (b) Employment and Training
12 noon	VISIT	Departure, with packed lunch, to Ross Priory, Loch Lomond and region (including a distillery)
5.00 p.m.	HIGH TEA	at Ross Priory
7.00 - 8.00 p.m.	Return to University	

SUNDAY 4 JULY

8.15 a.m.	BREAKFAST	
9.15 - 10.30 a.m.	SESSION 10: Chair: Dianne Norton	Plenary presentation Professor Jean Costa, University of Toulouse - *International developments in the self help education movement, U3A*
10.30 a.m.	COFFEE	
11.00 - 12 noon	SUMMARY / CONCLUDING Chair: Professor David James	Plenary discussion

CONFERENCE REPORT

Ronald Wilson

For its 1993 Conference the Association for Educational Gerontology (AEG) selected the theme of "Working and Learning Together" in the context of a broad international setting not only to mark the current European Year of Older People and Solidarity between Generations, but also to document, evaluate and draw attention to the increasing significance and need of educational work with the steadily growing numbers of elderly adults throughout the countries of the European Community and beyond. Most appropriately and happily, this Conference was sited in, and hosted by, the Senior Studies Institute of the University of Strathclyde, the practical and academic work of which exemplifies many aspects of the concerns engaging the 1993 AEG Conference.

Session 1: Conference Welcome and Opening Presentation: Work, the Second 50 Years

The opening session of Conference in the late afternoon of 1 July brought together some 75 delegates and participants from 13 countries and the Commission of the European Communities. In addition to nine of the member states of the EC, Canada, Israel and Slovenia were represented by participants. In opening the conference and welcoming so representative a gathering, the Chairman of AEG, Professor David James, University of Surrey, pointed out that for this, the first venture by the AEG into the European/international forum the location selected was Scotland and the setting the unique model of the Senior Studies Institute at the University of Strathclyde. He paid tribute to the Institute's Director, Lesley Hart, for her pioneering work both in the United Kingdom and internationally. On behalf of the AEG he presented her with a gift to mark the occasion.

The Vice-Principal of the University of Strathclyde, Professor Peter Reed, in formally welcoming the conference to the university and to Scotland, described the Senior Studies Institute, set up in 1987, as "one of the most recent success stories of this university". Thanks to the dedicated work of its Head and small full-time staff, assisted by a host of volunteers, it had amply demonstrated the need for new and more adequate premises which in a few months would be ready for its use.

With Professor James in the chair, Professor Emeritus Robert Kenedi of the University of Strathclyde then gave the opening presentation under the title *Work, the second 50 years*. He began by suggesting that the word "Work" in the title should be replaced by "Activity" and that, since he would not be

dealing directly with education, his paper might have some chance of being entertaining. His declaration at the outset, encapsulating his basic theme, ran as follows: "...the view is now widely held that, far from being a political burden, the greying population is a major skill reservoir which will have to be very fully utilised if our ageing societies are to maintain and continue their creativity and productivity". He then speculatively explored four pertinent areas:

i. The Pension Controversy

in which he demonstrated the untenability of the "dependency ratio" argument. Firstly, wealth creation in a "high-tech" society was achieved in the main by increased productive capacity; and, secondly, the dependent population did not consist solely of the retired, since children and unemployed of all ages also made up the economically dependent. Further, the idea that State pensions had to be paid for largely through taxes levied on those in employment took virtually no account of productivity increases which should be subject to levies in those sectors of industry and commerce enjoying the direct benefits therefrom. The present international anomalies in pension levels needed eliminating in favour of the higher ones.

ii. The Second Fifty Years

could now be realistically contemplated, with latest presumptions in the USA now pointing to a forthcoming average life span of 100 by the year 2010. This would imply replacing our present Health Service in Disease and Illness with a Health Maintenance Service. Not only the elderly would have to accept individual health maintenance responsibility, but the medical profession would also require to alter its pessimistic attitude to the possibility of a "quality of life" for the ageing.

iii. Possible Employment/Activity Patterns

were necessarily dominated by "high tech" developments in production, leading to the phenomenon, after each recession/recovery cycle, of the total of unemployed being higher than after the preceding cycle. Thus we had the prediction that by the 21st century only the health and entertainment industries would remain labour-intensive. The traditional work ethic would therefore no longer represent a viable recipe. New socio-economic thinking was urgently needed, making full use of the human resources available, regardless of age (and of "ageism"). Retirement could then become a relative concept, supplanted by a wider range of employment/activity opportunities, e.g. community-oriented, publicly subsidised self-help, and voluntary work.

iv. Voluntary Activity.

Studies undertaken at Strathclyde University, involving senior citizens themselves, showed clearly an *active* life expectancy, after normal retirement, of 25 plus years. This could form the basis of the volunteer resources likely to be needed by society. Conditions for such volunteer activities, it was generally agreed, should include collaboration with existing bodies rather than competition; clearly defined time periods instead of open-ended commitments; reimbursement of expenses incurred, at least; and no imposition on, or exploitation of, volunteers' goodwill. Voluntary activity projects considered ranged from adult literacy and assistance in schools to pro-activity on environmental matters and victim support groups, and aiding transition to dependent existence for the very elderly.

All the factors involved were subject today to unprecedented change and stress. They all indicated the urgency for society to deploy fully its hitherto grossly underused "resource in waiting", namely the capability, experience and wisdom of its senior population.

In the ensuing lively discussion points arising included the inadequacy of pensions (in Professor Kenedi's view these would eventually have to be based on a recognised basic standard of living); the relatively small amount of work actually done on a voluntary basis with the elderly, according to a four country survey (a consequence of its open-endedness, in the speaker's opinion); adequate pensions for single women; the need to give equal attention to mental health - primarily a matter for governmental action and support; and the link between work and education, where the socially and financially underprivileged were now priced out of access.

Thanking Professor Kenedi for a trenchant and rational analysis as well as a basically optimistic prognosis, the Chairman remarked that it had been a splendidly educational and entertaining start to the conference. Prior to dinner a wine reception gave participants an early opportunity to meet informally, exchange information and make personal contacts.

Session 2: Pre-Retirement Education in the European Community in Hard Times - a Need for Policy

This late evening plenary session was held on the subject of *Pre-Retirement Education in the EC in hard times - a Need for Policy*. This was given by Professor Ricardo Moragas Moragas, Master of Social Gerontology, University of Barcelona. Introducing him, the Chairman, Dr. Charles Freer of Glasgow recalled the significantly altered background to Pre-Retirement Education (PRE) now compared with 15-20 years ago. Then, retirement was a foreseeable event, usually after a lifetime spent in one type of occupation: now it tended to take place earlier in life, after careers marked by job changes and uncertainties. Professor Moragas had specialised in this area and had many published works to his name.

The speaker began by emphasising that in these difficult times PRE in EC countries was not regarded as an educational tool related to the improvement of economic efficiency. It tended therefore to be side-tracked. This should be exposed as narrow-gauge thinking. PRE, in effect, benefited not only those retiring, but contributed also to reducing the cost of health and social services, thereby maximising the effect of limited resources. It was now necessary to reassess *work* and *retirement* today in order properly to evaluate PRE. This would now be facilitated by the Social Gerontology European database, on the preparation of which he and his colleagues were currently engaged, as a result of the March 1993 Conference.

It had to be borne in mind that retirement today lasted longer (as did also front-end education), thereby shortening the total span of active working life. Here Professor Moragas clearly aligned himself with Professor Kenedi. In these "hard times" the stages of life had changed radically, and the data coming in showed beyond doubt that work was no longer valued above all else.

Less than 5% of retirees Europe-wide participated in PRE, trade unions as yet showed relatively little interest, and no systematic analysis of PRE's social benefits existed. Yet two aspects of PRE indubitably benefited society: health and social integration. His own department's Social Gerontology programme in Barcelona had evaluated a hundredfold saving in health resources through ten hours devoted to health education in PRE programmes. General recognition of this kind of effect would give PRE an economic dimension. Similarly, PRE embraced the social dimension where the social importance of volunteer work by the retired could be stressed, thereby activating many who would otherwise remain passive (passivity being, in society's view, the retirement norm). Much wider participation by the retired in educational and social roles was urgently needed, this in turn lending purpose and status to retirees' lives.

Professor Moragas then considered obstacles facing PRE. The principal psychological difficulty he recognised as negative stereotypes of retirement held by the population at large which reinforced their ignorance of the benefits of Pre-Retirement Preparation (PRP - a better term in this context than PRE). Economic obstacles included the dehumanisation of labour relations and their consequent reduction to purely material issues (e.g. salaries, material incentives and the like). An enlightened approach would include non-material factors. Typical organisational obstacles were lack of interest by employers and the small size of many employing organisations.

In conclusion Professor Moragas outlined a policy for PRP which posited in its programmes a mix of factual data and of training in positive attitudes to life, its potential, and relations with family and social groups. Retirement was the response of society for the solution of ageing, a general phenomenon affecting human life. If preparation for work necessitated 15 - 17 years' training, PRP should warrant more than a few hours. Retirement and its associated problems should be made much more visible, especially to those in high place, above all politicians. A general policy for Social Gerontology was urgently needed.

The discussion which followed ranged widely. It was considered that the general lack of interest in PRP could be countered in various ways, e.g. by starting with already successful role models, as in Spain, and by working with all kinds of appropriate agencies, from private enterprises to Open Universities - and governments. A multi-pronged approach was called for. Other aspects raised concerned the need for sensitive handling of matters like death and bereavement. The role of PR-"experts", now proliferating as never before, came under question: there was general agreement on the necessity for independent standards of quality assurance, along the lines of the PRA's new professional membership scheme and the Spanish Master of Gerontology programme.

Session 3: Older Women: What do they want? What do they know? - Education and Training Experiences within EC Countries

The first session of Friday, chaired by Lesley Hart, moved into the realm of women's concerns with a plenary presentation given by Dr Sheila Peace of the Open University's School of Health, Welfare and Community Education. Introducing herself, Sheila Peace described how various international research assignments over a period of years plus current experience in the team engaged in writing the new undergraduate OU course *An_Ageing Society* had contributed to the wide diversity of materials on which her paper was based. From these sources she hoped to assemble some sort of picture from which conclusions, and possibly recommendations, might be drawn. Defining "older women" in the absence of any common international yardstick was admittedly a difficulty: her norm would be statutory retirement age.

The Danage Survey and the 1993 UK Carnegie Inquiry into the Third Age revealed that the present generations of older women were educationally disadvantaged compared with men of the same age group. In Greece (1990) among 60-75 year olds, 22.3% of women were illiterate compared with 8.1% of men. In Denmark (1991) 63% of women aged 55-69 had had no formal education after the age of 11. In the UK (1993) only 2% of women over 50 had a degree (men 7%), and 67% had no qualifications whatsoever (men 53%). To lack of educational opportunities had to be added negative social attitudes towards the education of women, thereby compounding the disadvantaged status of many older women. From a recent report (Clennell 1990) covering batches of responses from the UK, the Federal Republic of Germany, France and Belgium, it was possible to extrapolate the varying proportions of female respondents. The report found, for example, that in the UK older women were more likely to be found taking practical, recreational or unassessed courses. Generally, at university level men predominated, with women, usually lacking the necessary entry qualifications, ending up in the more modest role of associate university students. Women in the German sample were described as living alone, culturally active and mobile, and looking for "new horizons". Given the predominance of single, divorced and widowed women and of married men in all these responses, there was a need to investigate the participation of older married women in adult education. A comparable Danage survey relating to persons aged 50-54 revealed women emphasising social life and personal development as main reasons for continuing their education in contrast to the more formal educational aims of the previously cited group.

Sheila Peace then referred to some specific case studies touching on issues for older women who were predominantly outside formal educational provision. These were:

i. The European Older Women's Project,

funded by the EC, the Comune di Perugia (Italy) and the London Borough of Lewisham (UK), with the aim of linking older women in EC member-states. It was intended to build up a database of good educational practice sited at the EC Directorate of Social Affairs, Brussels, and *inter alia* "through dialogue and exchange to seek to influence policy development and change at local, national and European levels". A major component was the established Lewisham-Perugia link.

Lewisham was concentrating on pensioners and ethnic groups in collaboration with the OU and with the Older Women's Educational Groups at the London City Lit. Community education and the development of research skills among older women were given strong emphasis. Skills exchanges were being organised and similarly in the field of cultures and traditions. Problems stemming from the shutdown of public adult education services and from increased access difficulties were being confronted and policy issues addressed. The latter included stereotyping, especially by the media; increasing knowledge of European life and minority cultures; and alleviating the social isolation of older women.

In Perugia there had been concentration on challenging ageism and the social construction of women's identity. Using research methods, older women had informed and challenged public opinion. Papers and reports, often with arresting titles (e.g. "Which grandmother do you like?" had been published, and the media employed in the project's work. Educational settings, such as a Senior Citizens' Centre were also being used in the effective promotion of both communication and solidarity between the generations. Parallel activities were known to be in progress elsewhere in the EC, for example in Greece and in Portugal.

ii. The "Growing Old Disgracefully" course

run at the Hen House, a private holiday and study centre in Lincolnshire, by Helen Cooper (c.f. Cooper 1993). These had been running for around eight years. They represented an agenda and a curriculum freely set by the changing body of participants, women between 55 and 75. They came together with the aim of widening not only their practical and aesthetic skills but also, and of equal importance, their horizons. This was achieved by challenging stereotypes and by exploring topics of their own choosing such as assertiveness, sexuality and old age. The course had gone from strength to strength, and the strengths resulting from it for the participants were enabling them to "remain disgraceful to the end".

iii. The "Time for Me - Outreach Course"

of the University of Ulster's Department of Adult and Continuing Education, held at Jordanstown. These 1-day per week 10 week courses, instituted in the mid-1980s, targeted women of all ages with the aim of increasing understanding, self-esteem and confidence, overcoming barriers and promoting personal growth. The vast majority of participants at the time of attendance were aged between 30 and 39. The format of the course was split, the morning of each day's meeting being devoted to students' personal needs and social skills, while the afternoons offered a wide range of topics, from Creative Writing and Local History to Psychology and Stress Management. An evaluation in 1992 confirmed the success of these courses in their principal aim, personal growth and confidence. That, rather than any idea of improving access to job opportunities, was cited as the main reason for their attendance in the course of students' responses.

iv. The Older Women's Education Group

was formed in London by Educational Resources for Older People, The City Lit, London, and the Older Feminist Network. In 1992 a Committee of the Older Women's Education Group developed a vocational curriculum around the theme of citizenship. Although not aimed solely at older women, these might well form a majority of its students. The syllabus comprised five main sections: women's studies; maximising income; basic educational and language skills; training and support for carers; and training and education for people seeking to volunteer in areas where their expertise might be considered "dated" or where they could face ageist attitudes.

So far this project had attracted a disappointingly low take-up, given the relatively heavily-populated catchment area. It was more than a possibility that withdrawals of concessionary fee arrangements and the general increase in difficulties of access to publicly provided adult education were the causes.

These case studies, and the previously cited international material, pointed, in the speaker's view, to a wide and widening diversity of educational needs on the part of older women, from acquiring ever new skills and knowledge to living a fuller life and even having fun. However, current negative developments in the funding of adult education in some EC countries, including the UK, were creating obstacles and leading to deprivation of educational opportunities in this area. A way ahead was being demonstrated by other EC countries with their cultural centres especially designed to meet the needs of senior citizens at this time of rapidly multiplying educational

tasks facing the community. Some of these issues, which also directly concerned the AEG, would feature in the new OU course, *An Ageing Society*, due to begin in February 1994, including the recent emergence of feminist analysis within gerontology.

Pressure of time left unfortunately little opportunity for plenary discussion of this extensive and relevant presentation, although many of the issues which it raised returned in subsequent sessions and workshops. One important point made before the closure of this session highlighted the currently increasing difficulty in the UK of securing the provision of all ranges of adult education for elderly people irrespective of gender on the relatively accessible basis hitherto regarded as the statutory norm for all stages of adult studenthood.

Sessions 4 & 5: Workshops

Four workshops, each of them covering a different but interrelated theme, were offered over two days of the conference in such a sequence that it was possible for every conference member to participate in a complete session of each workshop. The workshops were devoted to the following themes:

i. Intergenerational Solidarity
ii. Employment and Training
iii. Self-Help
iv. Rural Issues

As the titles indicate, these workshops covered a very representative spectrum of some of the major issues addressed by the conference. Inputs designed to set the scene and to stimulate discussion were made at each workshop session by an international panel of eleven experts and practitioners, four from the UK, six from other EC countries and one from the Commonwealth. The following notes on each workshop are in no way meant to be a comprehensive description of the proceedings, but are designed rather to convey something of the spirit and direction of inputs and discussion.

Reports on the first two workshops follow immediately below; reports on the third and fourth workshops are located under Sessions 8 and 9.

i. Intergenerational Solidarity

Three contributions formed the input material of this workshop, designed to focus on a vital aspect of the 1993 Year of Older People and Solidarity between Generations. The first, given by Klitos Symeonides, Inspector of Adult Education, Cyprus, concerned the special programme of the Cyprus Ministry of Education entitled *Interaction of Students and Older Persons*. Directly related to the Council of Europe's project *Adult Education and Social Change*, the programme had already been implemented in forty schools and had the final aim of covering all schools. The basic objective was to improve the lives of the elderly by helping them realise their potential, to acquire skills and to increase their self-respect. By basing this project in the schools and by involving pupils in its operation, it was intended that young persons should become aware of the needs and problems of older people, at the same time being made acquainted with the important part which the knowledge and experience of the elderly played in the country's life, and hence showing more respect and care for them. After explaining the implementation of the programme (responsibility at Ministry level residing with the Adult Education Inspectorate), the speaker elaborated on school-based activities developed as a result, both internally and within the community. International evidence of the wastefulness of putting the retired population "out to grass" was growing week by week. Despite the

general respect shown to the elderly in Cyprus, stereotypes of passivity and inactivity persisted.

The project was an attempt to dispel such ignorance and to build positive expectations among the young as well as in older people. To achieve this in the longer term greater enlightenment and guidance for very hard-pressed teachers was urgently required.

The next example, the Job Lynx Centre in Drumchapel, was drawn from Glasgow itself. Lesley Hart explained that this project, with a training element supplied by the Senior Studies Institute at Strathclyde, involved older men volunteering to give support, advice and encouragement to younger people encountering difficulties in finding or holding on to work. Jim Gifford, formerly an electrician and now a Job Lynx mentor and counsellor, described the working of the scheme in Drumchapel, a vast problem-laden municipal housing estate to the west of Glasgow. Jim related how the volunteers - nine or ten of them - during their initial training period persuaded the university to "do it our way", so that the training corresponded to their own perceived needs for the job. The scheme had now been running for one year and now involved each of the volunteers advising and mentoring the youngsters in 40-50 unpaid hours of work per week. Their task, in brief, was to gain the confidence of the young people on a one-to-one interviewing basis with the aim of cutting through official bureaucracy and establishing real contact. Though unpaid, the volunteers had bus passes and refreshments on two days per week. They were now pressing for the official age limits of their client group (at present 18-25 years) to be extended.

The third input statement was made by Leila Hastie, Head of the Senior Studies Institute, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. She gave a vivid outline of a summer project there involving three generations. In it families came together and worked co-operatively for one week in active, participatory learning. The minimum enrolment age was 10. Many topics were offered, such as geology and history. Despite the usually limited nature of their basic schooling, the participants, to a considerable degree self-educated, set a value on knowledge and learning. The way in which the older and the youngest members intercommunicated with ease was most striking, compared with the reserve generally shown by the middle generation on these courses. Similarly, the excellence of the children at computer learning proved a consistent feature, regardless of the level of computer skills possessed by their parents.

These three inputs provided valuable comparative material for the workshop discussions which ranged over methods of breaking down inappropriate and dangerous stereotyping between generations, as well as prejudice and misunderstanding to fostering intergenerational responsibility and co-operation and participatory learning.

ii. Employment and Training

Two sharply contrasting presentations formed the background material to this workshop, one from hi-tech Germany, the other from Greece. They served to demonstrate that older adults were not necessarily a homogeneous group with universal needs, but rather heterogeneous communities of individuals with widely differing socio-cultural histories and backgrounds.

Dr. Reinhild Otte from the Ministry for Family and Women's Affairs, Continuing Education and the Arts of the federal state of Baden-Württemberg, Germany, gave an account of the thirty technology training options available to retired citizens in Baden-Württemberg. Computer studies proved to be the most popular. Five main subjects - new technology in daily life, computers, leisure, macrotechnology and medicine - were broken down into discrete modules with a certain amount of crossover between subjects, thus enabling people to approach a new technology form a familiar or appealing perspective. In this largely urban context the volume of recruits enabled this extensive programme for older adults to be effectively mounted. It aimed, *inter alia*, to demystify modern machines, improve self-confidence and also to allow older people to undertake informed debate about new technology. Learning methods were up-to-date, open and flexible. Positive feedback ensured that no-one felt threatened. Results were gratifying, confirming research findings that learning, memory and intelligence did not decline with age but simply operated differently. The growing political voice of the retired in Germany should ensure that this facility would be here to stay.

Dr. Elizabeth Mestheneos of Sextant Savtas, Athens, spoke with insider knowledge of the vastly different economic and social climate in Greece, with half the population at any time living abroad, unemployment at 8%, no unemployment benefit or social security - and no pensions. Not surprisingly the black economy was flourishing, accounting for 35% of the GNP: many wives worked for their husbands. Thus, people survived because of family support, and older people contributed, as long as they were able, to the welfare of the family unit. Productive work, therefore, had priority over adult education. The employed worked normally in small staff units of less than ten. In the absence of state pensions there was little chance for people to develop interests in later life, although given the foregoing scenario, new technologies were quickly picked up. Of the small numbers of over 50s unemployed (1.9%) half had had no secondary education and 17% had never finished primary school. This handicapped their chances of formal training, although changes were developing, e.g. with employers using training grants to avoid bankruptcy. For employees this was a better option than taking a lump sum and departing.

In the subsequent discussions, Bruce Clarke, Third Age First, Swindon, recalled three powerful arguments to counter employers' resistance to

training older workers: (1) any technology had a shelf life of only four years; (2) existing skills of older people could be developed; (3) older workers were more likely to stay. The general message drawn from this workshop was that cultural elements and political climates had to be taken into account in employment and training. This multicultural dimension throughout the lands of Europe was basic to the richness of the continent and could be a source of strength in enabling understanding and tolerance to be cultivated between its many peoples and between generations.

Session 6: Working and Learning together: a European Overview

This joint presentation introduced in plenary session in the persons of the two speakers two important dimensions of the European Community into the conference's deliberations, namely the Parliamentary on the one hand and the Executive on the other. Welcoming the two guest presenters, Hugh McMahon, member of European Parliament for Strathclyde West, and Eamon McInerney, Directorate of the European Commission, Brussels, the chairman of this session, Robin Webster (Age Action Ireland), reminded those present that the AEG regarded this conference as an important opportunity to involve people not only from Europe but also from other continents in the discussion about the elderly in this 1993 European Year of Older People and Solidarity between Generations. He acknowledged on behalf of the AEG with gratitude the EC financial grant, without which the present conference could not have taken place. It was vital that the theme of education and older people should come much higher on the general agenda throughout Europe.

Hugh McMahon began by affirming that the issue of older people, far from being an issue of the past, was indeed one of the future. The 1993 European Year of Older People had as its aim the opening-up of a debate on how we should respond to some of the issues affecting the elderly which were caused by immense demographic changes currently in progress. The European Platform of Senior Organisations (EPSO) would start campaigning for equality for the interests of older generations on the basis of a plan which included the following demands:

i. Eliminate ageism in the EC itself (where the maximum age for applying for some posts is 35 or 40);

ii. Consider outlawing discrimination in employment on grounds of age;

iii. Create equal access to services;

iv. Create help for frail or housebound older people through funds for practical projects;

v. Initiate a debate on disability across Europe;

vi. Secure a firm commitment to protect the legal status and pension rights of the elderly employee and to introduce flexible retirement ages;

vii. Improve housing standards;

viii. Introduce a network of community support for senior citizens without exploiting family carers;

ix. All politicians throughout Europe to agree social policies for the elderly through collective party action.

Answering a battery of questions from the floor, Mr McMahon pointed out that, although technically no original brief existed for the European Parliament on matters affecting the elderly, its views had been sought on social affairs, and the situation of the elderly would be figuring in a Committee report. With the implementation of the Maastricht Treaty, education would also assume a bigger place in the Parliament's agenda. A further question on sexual and racial discrimination highlighted the worrying increase in racism throughout Europe: effective provision for racial equality was required. Responsibility for securing carers for the elderly remained firmly at national state level. In answer to a separate point the speaker confirmed that a kind of "Pensioners' Parliament" would shortly be inaugurated at EC level in the form of an international Pensioners' Convention.

Describing himself as the only full-time civil servant at the EC with responsibility for older people, Eamon McInerney began his presentation by considering the element "Working" in the conference title. He pointed out that Europe's unemployed currently totalled 17 million people. Alongside that one had to consider that over the age of 55 very few Europeans were, technically, still in work. Who were they and what sort of social protection did they need? They were certainly not getting much of it. It was important to remember that "old" was the opposite of both "young" and "new"; therein lay potential double discrimination. In a recent Eurobarometer survey 80% of 16,500 persons questioned believed that older people were discriminated against and that such practices should be stopped. The response from the younger generation fully agreed with this.

When it came to "learning", the model used in France was designed to produce perfect training for a lifelong job, whilst in USA, Japan and Scandinavia innovation in lifelong learning at individual level was the order of the day. At the present time any given technology and those practising it could be obsolete by the time the latter reached the age of thirty. The old certainties such as steady jobs, pay increments and the like had all disappeared. Victims of such changes could no longer have recognisable careers. The European Year for Older People was based on a learning principle, and we should all be helping in that learning process, mobilising the rich variety of skills and resources of the older people in the countries of Europe. Such structured projects already utilised the disappearing crafts of Italy and the health-counselling know-how of Rotterdam; they helped teenagers in trouble with the law in Limburg (NL) and mobilised business skills and advice in the UK. It was important that all opportunities for

helping the European Parliament and Commissions should be exploited, internationally via input networks; equally important was it that organisations like AEG should let people know of the positive work going on, since practitioners, even in the same country, were not always aware of what each other was doing.

Prior to dinner conference adjourned to the impressive newly constructed St. Mungo Museum situated between the Strathclyde campus and Glasgow's historic Cathedral. In this latest addition to Glasgow's civic galleries and museums, delegates were welcomed at a civic reception given by the Lord Provost of the City of Glasgow and the Convenor of Strathclyde Region in honour of the AEG conference. Members were met by Baillie Margaret Sinclair on behalf of Glasgow City Council and by Councillor William Perrie, Vice-Convenor of Strathclyde Regional Council. Both these dignitaries expressed the pleasure of city and region at being able to welcome so important a convention in their midst. Their speeches revealed understanding and concern for the issues facing elderly members of the population whom they represented, issues at the very heart of the AEG conference agenda.

On the walk back to the university campus delegates availed themselves of the opportunity to visit Provand's Lordship, the oldest surviving house in Glasgow and itself a small civic museum. On display there was a unique International Christmas Card Design Competition organised by the Senior Studies Institute of Strathclyde University in order to mark the 1993 Year of Older People and Solidarity between Generations. Under the title "Young and Old Together" the competition had generated wide interest among all age groups, as testified by the many entries of a high standard on themes associated with the purpose of European Year for Older People from all over the UK and Europe.

Session 7: Learning and Older Learners: a Role for the Media?

With William Tyler, Principal of the London City Lit in the chair, the evening session was devoted to a presentation by Brian Groombridge, Professor Emeritus of Adult Education, University of London. Introduced by the Chairman as being the one person in the UK capable of encompassing and, if at all possible, reconciling the reciprocal workings of both adult education and the media, Professor Groombridge proceeded in his presentation to demonstrate his ability to do just that.

His audience learned first of his early introduction to the educational role of "cat's whisker" radio during his youth at the hands of Sir Walford Davies in his musical education series. The trail thus begun led directly to his later professional oscillation between teaching, organising and researching in adult education on the one hand and his role as a bureaucrat at the Independent Broadcasting Authority on the other. Adult education, affecting far smaller numbers but transforming people in depth (and, perhaps, by multiplicator effects influencing many more indirectly) contrasted with broadcasting, reaching huge heterogeneous audiences, but more superficially. Where these two joined forces, as in the Open University, the effect was potentially enormous, and resulted in what came to be known as "Social Action Broadcasting". He was now involved in a new dimension, the employment of satellite communications for pan-European education.

The speaker then proceeded to elaborate and amend his title, firstly eliminating the question mark, since the media had become indispensable for the learning task in question. Further, and precisely for that reason, "role" had to be altered to "roles". Finally, although the term "the media" had a wider connotation, it was becoming more and more to be applied to television - and his talk would prove to be no exception to this trend.

Launching into the mainstream of his argument, Professor Groombridge then took his audience through the relevant sections of the recently published Carnegie Inquiry into the Third Age (Schuller and Bostyn 1992). This major investigation had produced nine specialist studies, a paper entitled "Irish Perspectives" and a Final Report. Six of the studies and the Final Report referred to, or made recommendations involving, the media in the sense of learning together. These comprised the studies on Leisure and on Citizenship, those on Homes and Travel, Volunteering, and Health, together with the (for our purpose) highly relevant paper on Education, Training and Information in the Third Age (Schuller & Bostyn 1992) and the Final Report.

Broadly speaking, these documents looked to the media, *inter alia*, to "inculcate healthy lifestyles...", to promote "desirable role models" and to "reflect real life". Despite the media's track record of achievements, the

Carnegie Report discovered misgivings, on three of which Brian Groombridge elaborated:

i. despite their reach, the media still had limitations (e.g. health educational programmes were "mainly watched by high socio-economic groups").

ii. broadcasting's character was becoming more commercial and less that of a public service. In the UK thoroughly bad legislation had reinforced this trend in the Independent sector, while the future of the BBC was unclear. These uncertainties led the Carnegie writers (e.g. Schuller and Bostyn) to conclude that, although TV and radio were "key vehicles for learning opportunities for older people, bridging formal and informal learning,... Their potential in this respect is not securely developed". Hence they recommended the building-in of a commitment to such learning opportunities into the remit of TV and radio.

iii. the media were still ageist (as the second Carnegie study by Midwinter [1992] on Citizenship showed) even by the way in which they omitted older people. Indeed, the UK's innovatory Channel 4 in the recent testimony of Naomi Sargent, the Channel's former Commissioning Editor for Educational Programmes, was not free from ageist attitudes.

Taking up these problems raised by Carnegie, Brian Groombridge pointed out that audience socio-economic mix could always, and did often, result where the educational nature of programmes was frequently disguised and normal scheduling times were used. This was true, even for targeted broadcasts. There were also signs that the powerful forces seeking to link the media to the market place might not go unopposed: both in the Independent Television Commission and in the BBC (with its new Education Directorate) the determination to maintain public service values was not lacking. Finally, on the charge of ageism, the evidence appeared to imply a paradox: the media were important to old people, but old people were not important to the media. Midwinter (1993) had cited research in which the average older person, it was revealed, spent about forty hours per week watching television, a far higher total than for other age groups. This picture of a (TV)-dependency culture among the elderly had become an international phenomenon.

In the speaker's view the paradox was currently in process of being resolved by two factors, the one of recent date, the other historical. Firstly, the sheer facts of demography appeared to be steering the new development; secondly, the historical factor derived directly from educational broadcasting. Against this background, Age Concern (England) was at present monitoring all types

of television programmes about ageing and older people, a task which kept it fully occupied! It seemed as if the charge against the media of neglecting old age might well be becoming out of date. Brian Groombridge here cited a list of TV programmes in the UK's targeted educational output, such as "Years Ahead" (Channel 4) and "The Coming of Age" (BBC) to show that producers were both well-informed and responsive to the growing social significance of ageing and the aged. Indeed, compared with the success of broadcasting in bringing experts within reach and in involving older people not only as consumers but also as contributors, the Carnegie Report adopted a somewhat narrow and passive concept of education for the elderly.

At present a wide spectrum of programmes was dealing with ageing and the Third (or Fourth?) Age. These ranged from those of Channel 4's "Dispatches" devoted to ageism at work right through to situation comedy series like "Last of the Summer Wine", "Waiting for God" (set in a private residential home) and, above all, "One Foot in the Grave" with the brilliant performances of Richard Wilson as the grouchy Victor Meldrew and Annette Crosbie as his long-suffering wife, Margaret. At this point Brian Groombridge clinched his argument by presenting his audience with extracts (and a running commentary) from this last-named series. This was followed by excerpts similarly treated from the "Nineties" episode of "They Sailed Away" (about the Summerhayes family who in the days of Empire founded and ran colleges in Africa); from "The Secret World of Sex"; and from the BBC's 1985 "The Coming of Age" which featured Ollie Hollingsworth, leader of a South London militant pensioners' organisation, reading with gusto a hymn to "growing old disgracefully".

In conclusion, the speaker argued that further progress would depend on dialogues and on active, "multi-pronged" partnerships between all the interests involved with, he hoped, the encouragement of bodies like the Association for Educational Gerontology, Age Concern, the Pre-Retirement Association and others. This process could be accelerated by using the visibility and relevance generated by the 1993 European Year of Older People. Possible objectives were: improvement of policy and practice; of access by older people to the media; of relationships between older people (as resources) and producers: of media-and-ageing awareness (e.g. through Age Concern's Media Watch project); and, lastly, to protect and strengthen what Schuller and Bostyn called the "cultural infra-structure", especially in broadcasting.

Like others before and after it, this presentation sharply illuminated one of the central issues of the conference agenda and was warmly acclaimed both for its content and for its style. Because of the very late hour (a Scottish Dance Band was already waiting in the wings for those with sufficient energy left for reels and strathspeys) it was not possible to continue in formal plenary discussion, a fact which did not prevent the issues raised being debated in lively fringe discussions till even later.

iii. Self-Help

A trio of brief presentations formed the material input for this workshop. The first, given by Liebje Hoekendijk of the Euronetwork Foundation in the Netherlands, outlined various kinds of self-help groups which had many features in common with the U3A and similar educational organisations. Help groups dealt with various specific problems, e.g. traumas arising from single events like rape, or bereavement, which necessitated the victim's facing up to them. Long-term traumas stemming from causes like abuse and detention in war camps frequently gave rise to deep-seated guilt complexes which required outside help in order to engage successfully with repressed feelings. In the case of addictions the individual was no longer in control of his/her own life; and individual help was less effective than the social control of a group. The overcoming of family-based problems, e.g. arising from severe disabilities, demanded strenuous individual efforts. Problems common to a number of individuals led to the creation of self-help groups who then often went on to give help in a wider social framework. In social action of this kind, many of the beneficiaries were among people in the over-50s age range whose energies no longer sufficed to cope with their problem. Conversely, many over-50s were, by virtue of their experience and expertise, able to make an invaluable contribution as helpers in all kinds of social contexts. This applied especially to those who had survived traumas, making them often good examples to the young.

This type of social self-help was highlighted in practice by the contribution of Con Murphy, Federation of Active Retirement Associations (FARA), Ireland. This had had its origins in Dun Laoghaire where in 1978 twelve people set up a group to organise activities for themselves, the main features of their policy being self-help, independence, and financial autonomy. From this beginning grew a national federation (FARA) which now comprised 76 associations, 57 of them in Greater Dublin, with a total membership of around 8000. Despite having no paid staff and no state funding, the annual growth rate was 20%. The federation consisted of locally based, democratically run associations which decided their own class and activity programmes. Class teachers were usually association members or, in some cases, teachers engaged for a specific purpose. Beyond this were many activities of a social (e.g. holidays, excursions) and an educational/ cultural (e.g. art, Irish conversation, swimming) nature. A new development by FARA was the AgeLink programme, an intergenerational project between older members of FARA associations and younger people like senior school students and juvenile unemployed. This was developing many forms, from reminiscence sessions to sporting events. One FARA group had won an award for its work in running a canteen and library for its local community college.

Lastly, Carole Newman, of the Greater London Forum for the Elderly, explained the purpose and work of that organisation, set up in 1988. The aim was to give pensioners a platform through which to represent their needs to their Local Authority, MPs, etc. 26 Fora, each based on a unit of local government (borough), now existed in London. Apart from publicity and information distribution, the Greater London Forum and its constituent Fora were heavily engaged in training older people so as to empower them to deal effectively with those in elected and bureaucratic authority, as well as to help them acquire skills to manage and develop fora. Such courses comprised training in presenting an argued case, drawing up and interpreting accounts, general communication skills, and running meetings and negotiating with officials and councillors. This work had now grown to such an extent that the central Forum was now organising training for the trainers at local level.

These presentations unleashed considerable discussion. Differing views were expressed about the necessity/desirability or otherwise of public (e.g. government) financial support for the kind of self-help organisations described, especially if such support came with limiting conditions attached to it. Further, a danger existed that such organisations could all too easily become the domain of one class, thereby risking excluding many social categories. On the other hand, properly developed, they could equally well serve to tap and exploit for the community's advantage a vast under-utilised reservoir of experience and skill among the retired.

iv. Rural Issues

Initial input to the sessions of this workshop was fuelled by two contributions, one from the U.K., the other from the Republic of Ireland.

Susan Cara, Principal Adult Education Officer, Norfolk County Council, described the Rural Education for Adults Project (REAP). This had owed its origin to a number of problems encountered in the sparsely populated areas of the county, such as lack of information, difficulties in providing adequate ranges of opportunities, and inadequate transport and communication facilities. This 3-year project ran from 1988 to 1991 on an annual budget of £28,000. Its aims included promoting educational opportunities in very rural areas, encouraging community development in such settings, and making guidance and information available to the local inhabitants.

REAP was based on a "whole community" approach and did not specifically target older adults. Nevertheless, through REAP's development brief, interests of older people were identified. In consequence, to take one example, in two very rural areas the first ever U3A groups in the county of Norfolk were able to be formed. Similarly, many other proactive developments flowing from the REAP project directly involved the elderly as contributors and participants. One of the best examples of this had been the reawakening of interest in local history through the work of the small

REAP field staff and the Norfolk Rural Community Council. This development had taken the form of village-based appraisals involving the building-up of "parish maps". 20-30 such maps had now been constructed, a task which would have been well nigh impossible without the active contribution of the knowledge and experience of older people. The whole project had revealed many new and unconventional ways of activating rural life on a community educational basis. In this, one of the essentials was without doubt the adoption of participative styles of working.

Tom Murray, Vocational Education Committee, County Roscommon, began by taking as read for his own area many of Susan Cara's problems and theses. Additionally, the emigration of the younger generation (in 1988 78% of school leavers had departed from the county) was a marked demographic feature. His activity amounted basically to a self-help operation aimed at (1) achieving attitude changes and (2) encouraging relationships and participation within rural communities.

He then outlined his department's programme of "Start Up" courses meeting from mid-morning to early afternoon one day per week for six weeks in local communities. Its content included items like information, coping skills, personal development, health, and living with inflation (a little like a Pre-Retirement course content). The midday break for lunch was important, providing a social hour as a means of developing relationships and using group resources. From 2 to 3 p.m. there followed a Craft/Leisure learning module with emphasis on sharing hobbies, interests, crafts, etc., again using group resources. Practical exercises in fitness and relaxation were also included.

Interesting lessons had been learned. The "anchor" person's remit had become, in effect, "make yourself redundant in 6 weeks". Guest lecturers with their innate tendency to take over and inculcate dependency were now termed "resource persons", with a brief to speak for five minutes, thereafter involving the group. Local organisations supplied many of the resource persons. "Start Up" was now being regularly continued in the form of "Follow Through" programmes as part of the county's network. At present there were nine such self-help group programmes. Several hundreds of older people were through them actively involved in projects like summer schools, activity days, creative writing (possibly for publication under European Year for Older People auspices), international exchanges and North and Southern Ireland co-operation. With little expenditure, independence and self-involvement had been created.

This session revealed clearly one of the dilemmas facing the conference organisers in these workshops. At the first meeting of the workshop the two presentations occupied much of the available time and the workshop discussions proper had to overflow beyond schedule. This proved of real benefit, enabling the whole complex of work with the elderly in rural areas

to be examined on a group basis form the standpoint of both inherent problems and methodological solutions. Self-help (though admittedly not without its own problems) could be part of the answer to the current general withdrawal in some countries of the professional adult education infrastructure. Conditions varied from country to country, as instanced by the Netherlands (with more village based organisations and, with the universal bicycle, no major transport problems) and by Switzerland (its elderly Memory Clubs now spreading through Europe). The definable, encompassable communities in rural areas provided, in the view of some members, a ready-made starting advantage for adult education of all kinds.

After a morning spent in the concluding sessions of workshops, conference members were offered a change of scene and activity in the afternoon. Leaving the university by coach after lunch members were treated to a stage-by-stage visual presentation of Glasgow's growth as the vehicle progressed from the historic centre through the once heavily industrialised working-class areas north-westwards to Maryhill, new post-World War II municipal housing blocks cheek by jowl with 19th century 4-storey stone tenements. Equally abruptly we were out of the city and in middle and upper middle-class Hillfoot and Milngavie, beyond which at Strathblane the long towering front of the Campsie Fells was reached. At their western extremity, below Dumgoyne Hill, the first destination lay. In the picturesque and congenial setting of the relatively small Glengoyne Highland Malt Whisky Distillery members were introduced to the history and production of the single malt whisky of Scotland. This was indeed an enriching enlargement of the palette of plenary presentations in the conference programme! From there the coach proceeded via the south end of Loch Lomond to Ross Priory on its shores. This country house and estate, with its well-documented associations with Sir Walter Scott, accommodates today the University of Strathclyde's Staff Residential Centre. In it and in its agreeable surroundings members had an opportunity of relaxing after the almost non-stop exertions of the previous 48 hours before returning in the evening to Glasgow.

Session 10: International Developments in the Self-Help Education Movement - the University of the Third Age

On Sunday morning, the presenter at the penultimate plenary session was Professor F.-Jean Costa. He began by reminding his audience that twenty years ago, in February 1973, on the initiative of his friend and colleague, Professor Pierre Vellas, the first university of the Third Age was created in his University of Toulouse. The term "Third Age" was then unknown to many, especially in Britain. Jean Costa had to explain its meaning on the radio in Brighton and Birmingham as well as in the USA. The term was rapidly adopted, and the Toulouse model was imitated throughout the world. As early as 1974 *Time Magazine* reported on it and the BBC came to Toulouse in 1978. He highlighted the importance of the U3A phenomenon by pointing to the recent edition of the textbook for the preparation of the Cambridge Advanced Certificate in which one of the documents presented to foreign students of English was "The University of the Third Age in Britain". In one generation U3A had become a cultural point of reference.

In the various types of U3As in the world, and more particularly in Europe, Jean Costa selected two opposing models:

i. At one end of the spectrum he presented the example of Paris IV (ex Sorbonne). Here students of the Third Age (younger adults could also join) were essentially consumers. They chose the courses they wanted and paid for each a tuition fee. They were encouraged to enrol by post. The only collective activity was cultural travel for those who could afford it. There was no "problem posing" here and there were no seminars on the problems affecting older people. These were supposed not to exist. The courses, of a very high standard, were given by the teaching staff of the university, who were remunerated. This was quite in keeping with the French academic tradition: teachers lecture, students listen. And it was more or less the system in the French U3As with university department status: Nantes, Reims, Nancy, Toulouse.

ii. At the other end one could cite the Cambridge model, with its theoretician, Peter Laslett. Here members enrolled were at the same time teachers and learners. The unit was absolutely self-sufficient. Students paid little; and there was no remuneration for teaching. This was the best example of self-help, imitated by Australia (Melbourne), with Jack McDonell. But the main motivation in Australia seemed to be economic, viz. lack of public funding, whereas in Cambridge it was a philosophy (TALIS, 1992).

A *via media* could best be represented by the U3A of Vicenza (Italy), the birthplace of the famous architect Palladio, not far form Verona and Venice. Here the founder, Professor Dal Ferro, a sociologist, had from the start viewed the U3A as a passage from forced inactivity and segregation to reinsertion into the life of the community through cultural and social up-dating. The students enrolled for a sort of training course of three years. After this they were generally better prepared to play their role in the community. Most of them went on attending courses and seminars in the U3A so as to avoid auto-marginalisation (TALIS, 1993).

It should be noted that, for the last few years, in the USA, China, Australia and South America, many U3As had been created on the initiative of older people themselves. Not all of them were run on the basis of complete autarchy, but there had been a shift from the Toulouse model (a U3A created and run by the teaching staff) to a model of self-organisation and self-funding, although most hired teachers from the nearest university.

Whatever the situation there was one point in common, on which Jean Costa wished to insist: culture and education. Education of the elderly was the basic idea for the mother U3A of Toulouse. That was the originality, the identity of the U3A as compared with other forms of assistance to older people. It was based on the idea that there existed a craving for knowledge in persons of the third age, that this need must be met, and that knowledge, and thus mental and spiritual activity, was the best means to fight isolation and marginalisation. As stated by André Lemieux (U3A of Montreal, Canada) students wanted to follow a really academic programme of courses, and they said that they attend the U3A classes both to learn and to meet other people, i.e. for personal and social development.

His personal experience of teaching older people had led Jean Costa to the following conclusions:

i. Education of elderly people must be taken seriously. It was not just a way to kill time. It was more than mass culture as offered to all by the media. Such culture was not to be discarded. But it merely maintained, whereas education developed. For many who could not afford in their youth a college education this was a new and extremely stimulating experience. It led to spiritual self-development (TALIS, 1993).

ii. As compared with the beginnings of the experience in the 70s, we were now dealing with a new generation of third agers, better educated, and with a stronger sense of their identity and of their own possibilities. They were also more demanding on their educators. The U3A might well be coupled with a

research department on ageing, as in Toulouse. But the U3A must remain a really educational unit.

iii. Research on the education of older students had thus become a necessity. For this reason Jean Costa had created, in 1991, the international study group and network TALIS (Third Age Learning International Studies).

This robust statement of the primacy of the U3A's educational task evoked a number of responses, some covering problems such as the difficulties encountered in reaching institutionalised and isolated elderly people. International co-operation between U3As was also cited, in particular the invaluable assistance given by U3A Grenoble to U3A London, producing a positive impact on London University itself.

Session 11: Educational Initiatives for Older People beyond the EC

Rev. Liam Carey of St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, took the chair for this final session which brought together three presentations from outside the European Community. This not only served to extend and concretise previous, more general presentations, but also threw into relief both yardsticks of comparison and wider international experience and perspectives.

1. The first paper, given by Professor Nina Mijoc, University of Ljubljana and U3A, Slovenia, opened with a description of the beginnings, against great odds, of U3A work in Slovenia. This started in 1984 with the formation of study circles for the elderly in Ljubljana and the involvement of young academics in developing them. Despite the official indifference of the then Communist regime to this work, the movement took root and spread from the very first study circles (in learning French). Through the link with Ljubljana University, research into andragogy was begun there, largely through the inspirational work of Professor Ana Krajnc. From modest beginnings the study circle, as the basic unit of the Slovenian U3A, quickly multiplied in numbers and range. Each local U3A unit consisted of study circles, with a mentor and an animator in each of them. The mentor was always a professional, helping the members (usually 10-14 in number) in planning the course and the methods/activities associated with it. He or she enjoyed the assistance of an animator, usually one of the student members. The growing popularity of the U3A had now led to the gradual replacement of negative, traditional views on older people by an acceptance of new, positive images of old age and by new educational methods. The typical U3A study circle, its topics and methods largely determined by its members, was becoming widely regarded as a valid vehicle for the education of older adults in community terms. Stronger links continued to be forged with other European countries and prospects for expanding these were good.

2. Dr Leila Hastie, Head of the Senior Studies Institute at the Grant MacEwan Community College, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, described how the work with older adults had outgrown its original base in the Humanities Department to become in 1988 an Institute in its own right. Apart from a base budget of $180,000 maintaining four paid staff, the Institute's finances were generated by course fees (these being carefully adjusted so as to remain affordable) and sponsorship. The socio-demographic background was important, and had constantly to be borne in mind. Alberta province was a very mixed one, only 100 years old and with a high proportion still of "settler" stock. This meant revising established tenets on curricular

development, methodology and related areas, always with a recognition of the fact that culture took time.

Under these circumstances academic staff were, at Dr Hastie's insistence carefully vetted and briefed from the standpoint of andragogy before being allowed to teach the very heterogeneous body of elderly students enrolling at the Institute. She also required from them recognition that learning in this area of work was a two-way process between "teachers" and "students". Alongside its main purpose of providing programmes for Seniors the Institute had other recognised functions, including training (e.g. for trainers, volunteers and for retirement), addressing social issues, and participating in applied research and publications. Innovative work was always being developed, a recent example being week-long intergenerational courses (in which, if needed, surrogate grandparents were provided). In regard to variety of subjects taught at the Institute no holds were barred, topics ranging from computers and job retraining to geology and music groups.

3. The final presentation was given by Ms Amanda Heslop, a worker with HelpAge International. She directed conference's attention to work being performed by her organisation in five different regions throughout the world, chiefly in "developing" and in underdeveloped countries. She reminded her audience that welfare and social structures were, historically a slow growth, confined in the main to "developed", i.e. European-type countries. In most third world countries things like retirement and pensions simply did not exist. Age care had low status and little priority in most of these countries, so that any help given in training was a great boost to carers. In this field HelpAge International had achieved some impressive results by working with governments and by contributing a brief, two day element into local training courses, e.g. of health workers. A key ingredient in this type of help was the concept that older people must be enabled to give back their knowledge to the community and thus to future generations. The extended family had become over wide areas a myth: war and urbanisation had isolated older people. Yet, in this era, ravaged by Aids, they were the acceptable teaching resource on which the rest of the community could draw for education based on experience. Aid workers should strengthen the role of the elderly, not seek to replace them. The presentation was illustrated by impressively relevant slide material on HelpAge International work in Kenya photographed by the speaker.

The discussion released by these three contrasting contributions revealed the wide community of concerns which had been opened up. As one common element it was noted that all three speakers had stressed the need for international links as a means not only of exchanging ideas about, but also of raising enthusiasm for, working with older people. In concluding statements the three presenters and the Chairman stressed the vital role of applied research and training across frontiers in work with older adults.

Session 12: Summing-up and Conclusion

The Chairman of the AEG, Professor David James, undertook the task of drawing the varied strands of this conference together and of offering some tentative conclusions. He began by observing that the menu presented had been exceptionally rich and that the task of summarising it verged on the impossible. The basic tenor of the conference, it seemed to him, had been that, while the old was not necessarily to be rejected as outworn and ugly, change, based on the old order was crucial, i.e. change in the sense of development and evolution. There was a general feeling also of being at a watershed in terms of the place and role of the elderly in society. He recalled the demographic prognoses outlined by Hugh McMahon and Eamon McInerney on the need to rethink the role of Europe's rapidly increasing older populations. He then went on to review briefly the formal presentations, starting with the first two with their respective emphases on looking at people as capital for themselves and for the community, and on the need to see education in a more developmental context in which the elderly, in particular women, were directly concerned. Subsequent contributors had all illuminated important aspects of the conference theme of working and learning together, and of linking theory and practice. The questions they had raised demanded serious study by the AEG. Similarly, the four workshops had examined many facets, in theory and above all practice, of the basic theme. Whether in rural or urban settings, in developing or fully developed, hi-tech societies, self-help, self-reliance and self-confidence were perceived as essential concomitants of the educational activation of the elderly.

The 1993 AEG Conference, declared Professor James, had been a splendid event, a focusing mechanism using an international context and input to increase awareness of the need to achieve much more in the field of educational gerontology. He closed his remarks by appealing to delegates to remain mindful of two key concepts enunciated during the conference: the exhortation by Professor Costa to "trust the students", since they would articulate what they needed; and the call from Professors Moragas and Groombridge for a "multi-pronged approach" in this work.

On behalf of the AEG he expressed warmest thanks to all who had contributed to the success of this conference: the committee members; the contributors from many lands; the delegates; and, finally, the conference hosts, the University of Strathclyde and, within it, Lesley Hart and all her colleagues and helpers in the Senior Studies Institute.

CONFERENCE EVALUATION

Some 75 delegates attended the 1993 AEG Conference and 32 returned an evaluation questionnaire despatched to them shortly after the end of the Conference. Much of the questionnaire was concerned with detailed matters concerning the organisation of the conference, housekeeping and planning of future conferences and it is not appropriate to re-produce responses here. Other responses, however, were related to general views of the Conference and to the national and international context in which older people live and learn and in which educational professionals work.

More than half of the respondents had not attended an AEG conference before. General observations on the Conference included:

- The event was enjoyed and appreciated (most frequent overall rating was 'very good')
- for many the Conference played an encouraging, even morale-boosting, role
- The city of Glasgow was a popular venue choice, although some found the hilly terrain and the facilities challenging
- Three quarters of the respondents were interested in attending future conferences, and half made offers of contributions to the programme
- The programme content was generally found to be interesting, stimulating and useful
- Workshops received a more mixed response. The matters considered generally merited more time and, perhaps, a more open-ended format.

In a question asking respondents how they would describe the Conference to someone else the five most common responses were:

- energising, enjoyable
- well planned, good structure, new ideas
- interesting mixture and balance of content
- chance to meet other professionals from the field
- genuinely international and multi-age.

Comments added to the evaluation form by respondents, sent to the secretariat subsequently, showed a concern for the promotion of AEG in its professional and international roles:

- AEG should have made its presence as the organising association more clearly felt
- AEG could publicise good practice and innovatory projects more
- AEG could undertake an international survey of those involved in educational gerontology
- AEG should clarify and publicise its international aims which could possibly include the establishment of regional networks world-wide
- AEG should establish what role it can play in the relationship between formal, non formal and informal third age education.

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